



## Curating and Cultural Difference in the Iberian Context. From Difference to Self-Reflexivity (and Back Again?)

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Abstract:	<p>This article analyzes how curatorial practices deal with coloniality and, in a broader sense, with the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in our postcolonial present. To do so, it approaches the curatorial landscape of the Iberian territories in a moment of a radical geopolitical transformation, marked by the inclusion of Portugal and Spain in the European Union, the critical responses to the commemoration of their imperial past, and the rethinking of their postcolonial, post-dictatorial identity. Frequently framed from the point of view of exceptionalism, in a separated way, this article argues that Iberian postcoloniality can be better understood when approached from a comparative perspective.</p>

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**Curating and Cultural Difference in the Iberian Context. From Difference to Self-  
Reflexivity (and Back Again)**

“Não tivemos praticamente uma antropologia colonial; os esforços para repensar a história colonial portuguesa e a nossa situação pós-colonial estão ainda nos seus estágios iniciais. [...] Nos domínios das artes visuais—da crítica, da história, da curadoria, da própria prática artística—o silêncio e a invisibilidade sobre o não-ocidental ainda são dominantes.”<sup>1</sup>

“No hay en estos comisariados una articulación del contexto cultural y artístico en el que emergen las obras escogidas. Se opta por exhibirlas de forma inconexa como pertenecientes a una categoría historiográfica o estilema vacío que las desgaja de su función social, convirtiéndolas en un producto de consumo visual.”<sup>2</sup>

Written in two different languages and belonging to two different contexts, those quotes outline a similar predicament. They are part of the scarce number of texts dealing with how curatorial practices shaped the postcolonial, postdictatorship present of Portugal and Spain. Both authors give account of a similar difficulty: that of displaying and confronting the legacies of colonialism in Iberian societies. They derive that difficulty from heterogeneous reasons, alluding to the silence of Iberian societies towards its postcolonial reality, but also to the risk of isolating critical discourses into thematic clusters, where those can be easily commodified and turned innocuous. This article analyzes how curating has been used since 1990s in order to define postcolonial cultural representations in the Iberian context. The curatorial examples that will be discussed engage (with heterogeneous results, as we will see) this predicament in multiple ways, among them, by showcasing the artistic work of the

former colonial territories and by challenging normative views of Spanish and Portuguese art through the reinforcement and display of alternative geo-cultural links. The focus of those practices is on turning productive the challenge of certain representations on how the ex-colonial territories are perceived and how the Iberian territories think their own identity and cultural policy in relation to its colonial past.

There has been a tenacious resistance to compare the Spanish and Portuguese curatorial genealogies dealing with coloniality<sup>3</sup>, despite the centrality of curatorial practices in reshaping both contexts' supposedly postcolonial identity. It is true that both countries build their postcolonial imaginaries ignoring each other: Portugal does so through the critical rethinking of *Lusofonia*, challenging the myth of past-times *Descobrimentos* as a mirror of a democratic and multicultural present-day Portugal<sup>4</sup>. In the case of Spain, a parallel thinking exists dismantling the assumption that the country's colonial past turned the country into a pioneer of globalization and cultural miscegenation. Moreover, the dissimilarities shaping both territories' historical process are evident: Portugal built its democratic image through the coupling of decolonization and the 1974 Revolution; Spain, through economic modernization and territorial reorganization. In the Spanish context, furthermore, this process will take a specific form, since each *Comunidad Autónoma* will reclaim its historical and contemporary singularity through highlighting its relation with the non-European space<sup>5</sup>.

Despite those differences, however, the effervescence of art exhibitions dealing with the imperial legacies and the postcolonial present of Iberian societies matched and somehow responded to a historical process shared to a big degree in Iberian recent history. This process is marked by economic development and the imbrication with neoliberal capitalism and modernization through the incorporation to the space of the European Union<sup>6</sup>. It will mark a redefinition of Portugal and Spain's geopolitical position, turning them into receptors of migratory fluxes from former colonial territories<sup>7</sup>. Both countries attempted then to create an

image of themselves as modern, developed, cosmopolitan societies, one allowing (at least in theory) to come to terms both with the traumatic memory of dictatorship and empire. Economic modernization, postcolonial remembering (or forgetting) and democratic normalization, thus, were sought to run hand by hand. In this context, art became the most suitable herald of that desired image of contemporaneity. The rise of contemporary art as a central concern matches this historical process. Curating was frequently used by Spanish and Portuguese museums and cultural institutions to imagine and fix their postcolonial identity within the landscape emerging after 1985<sup>8</sup>. The curatorial discourses arising in that conundrum were, however, caught in a complex dynamic that includes the negotiation of Portuguese and Spanish role within the European space, the management and *reconstitution* of critical memories around the legacies of colonialism<sup>9</sup>, and the use of cultural industries and institutional platforms to embed artistic creativity within a globalized consumer society. The creation of several contemporary art centers and museums in both countries during the 1990s can exemplify that last point<sup>10</sup>. From that position, a possibility of comparison within the Iberian context emerges as possible<sup>11</sup>.

Curatorial practice is concerned both with practice as well as with questioning how that practice is thought, displayed and circulated<sup>12</sup>. With creating images and imaginaries as much as with understanding how those are hierarchically organized. This article will aim to show how this double dimension allows witnessing from a privileged standpoint how identity images are constructed and publicly materialized. Dealing with the intersection between curating and coloniality requires paying attention to a complex confluence of elements. To begin with, the set of practices engaging that intersection are far from homogeneous. Whereas some of the examples analyzed here reinforce the supposed centrality of Portugal and Spain within their “areas of influence” (thus continuing uneven elements of the imperial

imaginary), others are actively concerned with dismantling that centrality of former metropolitan territories and with unmaking uneven power relations and cultural policies.

Portugal and Spain imported in many ways their postcolonial models, being this situation a layer of cultural dependence that its added to the power relations manifested through the curating of art from former colonial territories. Their curatorial landscapes, in that sense, are informed both by their postcolonial interest in their own imperial history, but also from their culturally dependent and semi-peripheral position<sup>13</sup>. For instance, when Portuguese institutions approach African art, or when Spanish institutions do the same with artistic practice from the Caribbean territory, they are not just producing discourses on a distant Other; those practices *are also fully embedded within a larger framework of competing views and representations*. In other words, whereas there is no doubt that those curatorial initiatives are embedded into the colonial bonds of those territories, this connection is framed *also* through a comparison with the curatorial models put into practice by other European and American territories concerning Africa and the Caribbean<sup>14</sup>. It is important, therefore, to conceive the curatorial postcolonial approaches to Iberian reality as responses to a specific, singular historical and social conundrum, one not explainable through external theories or practices, although potentially influenced by, and influencing, those.

### **Curating Coloniality in the Iberian Context, between Curiosity, Spectacle and Self-Reflexivity**

What follows is an analysis of the main curatorial initiatives related in different ways to coloniality in the Iberian space. Before undertaking this examination, three considerations are in order: 1 - the register presented here does not intend to be exhaustive; 2 - the curatorial examples gathered here are far from homogeneous in their formulation; 3 - finally, the

considerations developed here count with significant historical precedents spanning the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. If this article begins this register from the period of the 1990s and the 2000s, it is because it will be in that particular moment that those manifestations multiply their number and gain cultural relevance. Broadly speaking, we can divide our case study in two stages: a first one strongly influenced by the cultural policies linked to the commemorations taking place in the 1990s, prone to celebrate a positive image of globalization, mobility and multiculturalism; and a second one in which we can see a concern on how should the own postcolonial image of both counties dealt with starts becoming a pressing matter. Although the turn of the century could mark the separation between them, there are multiple continuities, and indeed the first trend will be kept very much alive—and dominant—until the present moment. From that position, in this article those practices will be categorized within four (interconnected) groups:

*1-Curating and/against the Commemorations*

The first group of curatorial practices examined here is linked to the commemorations taking place in 1992 in Spain (date of the anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in the Americas) and in 1998 and 2000 in Portugal (the first date responded to the commemoration of the 500 anniversary of the *Descobrimentos*, the second to the “discovery” of Brazil). In the Spanish context, 1992 emerges as a suitable date to begin this itinerary, not just because of the weight of the *Centenario* and the Seville International Exhibition, but also because it will be then when we find the first exercises attempting to conceptualize curating as a critical exercise able to reflect on how artworks and discourses are presented.

That year was marked by exhibitions such as *America Bride of the Sun* (1991, Antwerp Royal Museum of Fine Arts), *Tierra de nadie* (Granada, curated by José Lebrero

Stäls) or *Plus Ultra* (Seville, curated by Mar Villaespesa), being the latter the most interesting project in critical terms. *Plus Ultra* consisted on a series of public art interventions linked to the Andalusian Pavilion of the 1992 Expo. Eight artists were asked to confront the main aspects of Andalusian identity, which in the Seville of the commemorations meant addressing the region's "transatlantic vocation".<sup>15</sup> *Plus Ultra* was the motto of imperial Spain, meaning "further beyond". In using it as exhibition title, it attempted to subvert this allegedly colonial vocation of Spain, in order to take the identity redefinition associated to 1992 beyond a simple celebratory tone. Four Spanish (Francesc Torres, Soledad Sevilla, Agustín Parejo School and Agencia de Viaje) and four American artists (James Lee Byars, Denis Adams, Alfredo Jaar and Adrian Piper) were asked to make artistic interventions in spaces of cultural relevance in several Andalusian cities. A first element of interest, thus, comes from the fact of translating the locus of criticism outside the museum, but also outside the spectacularized and official space of the Expo. *Plus Ultra* criticized the celebratory tone of a Spain in process of modernization and democratization, pointing out the persistence of the darker side of the legacy of colonialism in that society. In order to do that, Mar Villaespesa, the curator, needed to ensure the project's independence from regional and national political organisms, raising at the same time some funding coming from those sources. In order to do that, the practical management of the project was controlled through Carta de Ajuste/BNV, created in 1989.

*Plus Ultra*, then, was innovative for several reasons: it constituted the first curatorial exercise that shown a clear interest in challenging the Spanish official imperialist rhetoric and in addressing Spain's postcolonial condition. Moreover, the exhibition stepped out the spaces dedicated to "high culture" and "contemporary art" in order to place this criticism in highly symbolic popular venues<sup>16</sup>. Related to that, it portrayed a reflexive detachment from any logic of commemoration, and also from the contexts associated to it<sup>17</sup>. Fourth, it provoked a

confrontation and self-awareness of the uses of contemporary art in the branding of the new image of a modern, cosmopolitan Spain by political powers. It also achieved a de-exoticization of the icons involved in the 1992 celebrations, through the incardination of the *memorabilia* of colonial nostalgia within the contradictions of the here and now of a country in process of being rebranded as democratic entity. Finally, the project pursued a reconsideration of the figure of the curator, who in *Plus Ultra* appears as a collaborator instead of as all-powerful manager<sup>18</sup>.

Villaespesa's curatorial activity will continue investigating the contradictions of present day Spain. Her exhibitions delve into the deficiencies derived from the articulation of a sanitized imperial memory, the consequences of that memory in the forms of migrations and racism, and the conjunction of democracy and neoliberalism. This is evident in *Além da Água*, *Copiacabana* and above all in *Almadraba*, two projects curated in 1996 and 1997 respectively. *Além da Água* was a project co-curated with Jorge Castanho that took place at the two sides of the border between Portugal and Spain, consisting on a series of interventions that problematize the use and distribution of water in the Alentejo, Extremadura and Andalucía regions with the influence of EU politics as backdrop<sup>19</sup>. On its part, *Almadraba*, co-curated with Corine Diserens, consisted on a series of multidisciplinary activities disseminated between Algeciras and Gibraltar in the South coast of the Iberian Peninsula and Tanger in Morocco, interested in turning evident the consequences of neoliberalism within the European space for migrants and for the own understanding of the EU's role within the Mediterranean context. Successive interventions organized through the UNIA (International University of Andalucía) Arte y Pensamiento program will keep confronting this issue<sup>20</sup>.

In the case of Portugal, the turn of the century was also a politically-charged moment in Portugal due to the conjunction of the "commemorations". 1998 marked a constructive



frenzy in Lisbon manifested in the 1998 International Exhibition, dedicated to “the Oceans”, which implied the reurbanization of the Parque das Nações area. The International Exhibition brought a reformulation of the concerns that were present in the 1940 *Exposição do mundo português* [Exhibition of the Portuguese World]” organized by the Estado Novo, where Portugal was presented as a rural and conservative nation that knew to apply a “soft” version of colonialism<sup>21</sup>. In 1998, the weight of Portugal’s colonial and imperial glories did not disappear; on the contrary, it was resampled as a central element of modern-day Portugal, a democratic, cosmopolitan and fraternal nation ready to play a key role in the European operational board. This “ideological staging”<sup>22</sup> implied adopting a celebratory view of that past and, linked to that, a tenacious forgetting of the open wounds leaved open by the decolonization process that took place as recently as in 1975.

The relation with Brazil was addressed, among other means, through a series of art exhibitions. Although there was a previous interest in Brazil by Portuguese cultural institutions, the years between 1998 and 2002 registered a significant peak<sup>23</sup>. Five main projects must be mentioned here: Isabel Carlos’s *Trading Images* exhibition series, *Século XX: Arte do Brasil*, *Mostra do Redescobrimento*, Ricardo Basbaum’s *Mistura+Confronto*, and Ruth Rosengarten’s and Paulo Reis’s *Um oceano inteiro para nadar*.

*Trading Images* comprised four exhibitions, dedicated to Adriana de Varejão, Eugénio Dittiborn, Narelle Jubelin and Fernando Alvim (this last one, entitled *Memória Íntimas Marcas*, was in fact a restaging of Alvim’s collaboration with Carlos Garaicoa and Gavin Younge at Cuito Canavale, Angola<sup>24</sup>). The curator of those four shows justified their articulation through the artists’ interest in raising concerns on the Lusophone territory’s postcolonial condition: Varejão deconstructed the Portuguese tradition of *azulejos* and Jubelin approached the case of Timor (by that time still politically-dependent from Portugal). Although not directly addressing any issue linked to the context, Dittiborn’s *Pinturas*

*Aeropostales* shared the interest for exploring memory and archival registers. *Mistura+Confronto* consisted on a juxtaposition of Portuguese and Brazilian artists<sup>25</sup>; *Arte do Brasil* recurred to the last edition of the São Paulo Biennale to reconstruct Brazilian's recent art history. In fact, the exhibition followed a chronological perspective, thus reinforcing the sense of exhibiting a national art context instead of problematizing the linkages between those creations, the Brazilian cultural milieu, and the Portuguese context of display (Renata Ribeiro alludes to a "lack of confrontation" that locates Brazilian art "within a parenthesis, happening in another space (and time)")<sup>26</sup>.

Of all the exhibitions organized around the commemorations, *Um oceano inteiro para nadar* stands as the most critical exercise, inaugurating a new way of understanding curatorship based on self-reflexivity, context-awareness and a balanced articulation of aesthetic discourses and timely comparisons. It was commissioned in 2000 by Culturgest and National Committee for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries. Its curatorial statement, elaborated through a dialogue among the curators Ruth Rosengarten (responsible for the selection of the "Portuguese side") and Paulo Reis (who curated the "Brazilian side"), evidences the need of surpassing stylistic and generational criteria. Costa Dias, who analyzes the exhibition in detail, categorizes it as "both the outcome of a celebration of nationality, and an attempt to hold a curatorial contra-imperial discourse, thus a deconstruction of existent national identities."<sup>27</sup> The text opening the catalog is a summary of the dialogues held among the curators, in which the art historical considerations on the possible historical links between Portuguese and Brazilian modernity are questioned at the light of the viability of establishing any kind of comparison at the light of the *Centenário*. Whereas Reis wanted first to develop a chronological comparison between the art of both countries, Rosengarten embraced a curatorial process challenging monumentality and natural correlations, favoring transitority and identity incoherence, and voicing self-criticism. She also rejects the idea of juxtaposing

both countries' artistic genealogies. The ideas of commemorating anything and of contraposing in virtue of its colonial link are, therefore, the first elements to be questioned. For Rosengarten, the historical circumstances are an unavoidable reality that should be present at the core of the curatorial experience. At the beginning of the catalogue, she wonders:

Continuo a achar algo aleatório—mas certamente um desafio—articular a arte brasileira e a arte portuguesa. Qual a razão de tal articulação? Um passado histórico comum? No seu papel de colonizador, Portugal tem tido pouco espírito de autocritica—em comparação, por exemplo, com a Inglaterra em relação à Índia. Basta ver a euforia do discurso dos “Descobrimentos” que ainda hoje reina neste país.<sup>28</sup>

Later on, she argues that “obviamente o facto de esta exposição coincidir com as supostas celebrações dos ‘500 anos do Brasil’ não pode ser posto de lado. Ou se celebra, ou se sujeita a uma análise crítica qualquer.”<sup>29</sup> That curatorial basis was also present in the selection of artworks. Rejecting the idea of offering a nostalgic account of both countries' “encounters”, the exhibition focused on contemporary creativity, mixing pieces from the 1970s and others created for the purpose. Many of them, furthermore, addressed the colonial question in direct terms, as exemplified by Fernanda Fragateiro's *Só é possível se formos dois*, Ângela Ferreira's *Amnésia*, Anna Bella Geiger's *Orbis Descriptio com Fronteiras Indiferentes II*, Nelson Leirner's *Terra à Vista (A primeira Missa)*, Paula Rego's *A primeira missa no Brasil*, Julião Sarmento's *Amazónia*, Manuel Valente Alves's *A Victória de Samotrácia* or Ana Vidigal's *Penélope*.

## 2-Displaying the Other

A second group of curatorial initiatives displayed art from “peripheral contexts” as a strategy to counter the Eurocentrism and localism of the Iberian curatorial arenas. Many of those exhibitions served a very particular purpose: that of constructing actively the own’s identity in sight of that supposedly distant Other. However, many of those discourses will end up producing stereotypical images of that Other, leaving the colonial matrix of Iberian cultural policies untouched.

In Portugal, the exhibitions taking place after the commemorations will have Africa as their main referent. This interest will match the *boom* of African art that followed Enwezor’s Documenta and exhibitions such as *Africa Remix*, but also the emergence of Lusophone Africa in the international panorama<sup>30</sup>, and the commemoration of the independence of Angola and Moçambique in 2005. In that sense, although there are important precedents in former decades<sup>31</sup>, this exhibitional model dealing with African art will find its moment in the 2000s. This interest will be framed mostly through ambitious cultural programs and initiatives that transcended the materialization of a single exhibition. Concerning art shows, we find a wide number of initiatives, among them *Arte moçambicana* (1999, Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, Lisbon), *Malangatana de Matalana a Matalana* (1999, Instituto Camões, Lisbon), *Mais a Sul. África na colecção CGD* (2004, Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Lisbon), *Iluminando Vidas. Ricardo Rangel e a Fotografia Moçambicana* (2004, Culturgest, Porto), *Looking Both Ways. Das Esquinas do Olhar* (2005, FCG, Lisbon), *Réplica e Rebeldia* (2006, itinerant exhibition), *África pelos africanos. Colectiva Fotógrafos 1900-2000* (2005, Centro Português de Fotografia, Porto), *Lisboa-Luanda-Maputo* (2007, Cordoaria Nacional, Lisbon), *Artistas de Moçambique. Percursos recentes* (2007, CGD, Lisbon), *De Malangatana a Cabrita Reis. Obras da colecção CGD* (2008, Culturgest, Lisbon), *David Goldblatt* (2009, Fundação Serralves, Porto), *Guy Tillim. Av. Lumumba*

(2009, Fundação Serralves, Porto), *Artistas de Moçambique em Portugal* (2010, Casino de Estoril, Lisbon).

Some common elements among those exhibitional practices can be mentioned: they had a thematic orientation; although there are exceptions, many of them eschewed the critical interest in problematizing the meaning of displaying African art in postcolonial Portugal; many also kept a celebratory and exotic approach to an African art; few questioned the role of Portuguese cultural institutions in categorizing and inventorying African artistic discourses<sup>32</sup>; few, finally, challenged the connection between those “African discourses” and the conflictive condition of the Portuguese postcolonial nation.

*Réplica e Rebeldia*, one of the sharpest examples, summarizes many of the issues that those shows confront. Curated by António Pinto Ribeiro and orchestrated by the Camões Institute to itinerate between Brazil, the Lusophone African countries and Portugal, the show excluded the presence of Portuguese artists. This exclusion of Portuguese artists, which is presented as a gesture of respect, is nevertheless framed through a position in which the *Rebeldia* will only come after the *Réplica*, the mimesis from Western values. Furthermore, the presence of a “múltipla orfandade” is quarreled in order to justify the exhibition’s territorial coverage. That leads to the inclusion of Afro-Brazilian artists as the unique representatives of that country, something that is justified by alluding to a similar equation with traditional, non-modern values. Being this a valid point of departure, the fact of having the Camões Institute as patronizing entity, and the final impossibility of bringing the exhibition to Portugal, diffculted the dialogues that the exhibition sought to create.

If we move now to Spain, we will find that many of the thematic exhibitions organized during the 1990s and 2000s shared similar constraints. Several exhibitions attempted to think the consequences of globalization and migratory fluxes in the creation of hybrid identities and cultural dialogues. Projects such as *Cocido y Crudo* (1994, Reina Sofía

Museum, curated by Dan Cameron) or *Comer o no comer* (2002, Centro de Arte de Salamanca, curated by Darío Corbeira) exemplify this path. The first revolved around the parallelism between “cooked and raw”, between the modernized and civilized and the “traditional”, somehow echoing (and being trapped in) the *Magiciens* ethos. The second also borrowed the culinary metaphor to bring issues of cultural difference and inequality, in this case elaborating a journey through the relations between art and food in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The consolidation of a system of biennials and art events also borrowed from this interest in “displaying the Other”, something accomplished with different degrees of critical value and interest. The most evident example of this can be found in ARCO’s policy of inviting a country as special guest for each edition, a measure that turned the art fair into a tool for foreign relations. Other cases, however, prove to be more worth of analysis. For instance, in 2010 Murcia was chosen as the venue of *Manifesta 8*<sup>33</sup>. That edition was shaped by the existence for the first time of a curatorial topic, Europe’s relations with North Africa<sup>34</sup>. This was behind the election of Murcia as venue: the region was supposed to stand for a privileged, century-long relation with the Maghreb (a “particular emphasis on the history of Arabic culture rooted in the Region of Murcia” is mentioned in the official information of the biennale<sup>35</sup>). However, in the practice this framing bore major pitfalls: while shaped by a “history of Arabic culture” (as the rest of the Iberian Peninsula, on the other hand), the relation of present-day Murcia with North Africa was overemphasized and far-fetched. Furthermore, those artists who had no previous contact with the South of Spain displayed somehow an exotic gaze upon the Murcia region. This contrasted with the work of local artists, many of whom had a previous trajectory of collaboration and research on North Africa. Those were grouped under the Parallel Events exhibition, which took place in different locations across the *Comunidad Autónoma* and was far more sustainable and connected to the local population. *Manifesta 8* stood for an alliance between

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3 spectaculatization and thematized difference. Not only was the project imposed from outside;  
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5 it also relied heavily on a colossal expenditure that would not have any continuity in a region  
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7 affected by the economic crisis.  
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10 A more sustainable example of biennale developing a regional approach with some  
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12 more fortune can be found in Pontevedra. Its last editions were dedicated to exploring the  
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14 artistic production of contexts that receive Galician migration, and usually implied the  
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16 juxtaposition (and in some cases the collaboration) between local and foreign artists. The  
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18 2010 edition, for example, was dedicated to the Caribbean and Central America and, more  
19  
20 specifically, to the memory of Virginia Pérez Rattón, driving force of *TeorÉtica*, one of the  
21  
22 oldest and more active alternative art spaces in the Central American region. Curated by  
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24 Santiago Olmo, who followed the models of the last editions of the Mercosul and São Paulo  
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26 biennials, the event stressed the importance of the educational side and the connection with  
27  
28 the local context. This was achieved through several means: besides the main exhibition, the  
29  
30 biennial engaged several independent art collectives from Galicia, which made site-specific  
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32 interventions in the Ría de Arousa; it also involved Vigo University and the Pontevedra  
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34 Museum, and included a series of meetings with the American artists.  
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39 The Canary Islands offer what is perhaps the most sustained and critically-informed  
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41 example of curatorial practice focusing on difference in the Spanish context in the last two  
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43 decades. The activity of several art centers, especially the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno  
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45 (CAAM), which was founded in 1989 in Las Palmas, developed from a very early moment a  
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47 consistent amount of curatorial and research initiatives seeking to define the position of the  
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49 Canarian archipelago towards Europe, Africa and America. The Canarian curatorial  
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51 landscape was thus defined from a triple movement of singularization within the Spanish  
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53 nation-state and the Iberian context, of detachment of Eurocentric, continental assumptions of  
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55 European culture, and of approach to Africa and Latin America.  
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During the 1990s, we find several curatorial initiatives attempting to define critically the social and cultural implications of that cultural mapping. This is already evident in early exhibitions organized by the CAAM: *Surrealismo entre Viejo y Nuevo Mundo* (1989, curated by Juan Manuel Bonet) highlighted the connections between Canarian and Latin American Surrealisms, a dialogue that will be continued through exhibitions such as *Voces de Ultramar: Arte en América Latina y Canarias: 1910-1960* (1992, curated by Carmen Waugh), *Cuba Siglo XX: Modernidad y Sincretismo* (1996, curated by María Luísa Borrás and Antonio Zaya) or *El indigenismo en diálogo. Canarias-América 1920-1950* (2001, curated by María Candelaria Hernández). Concerning Africa, to the celebrated *Otro País. Escalas Africanas* (1994-1995, curated by Simon Njami and Jöelle Busca) we have to add the activity of spaces such as the Tenerife Espacio de las Artes (TEA), Casa África or the Canarian Biennale of Art, Architecture and Landscape (created in 2009 in Las Palmas), with a strong participation of African artists<sup>36</sup>. A second body of exhibitions stress the role of insular territories in the dissemination and decentering of continental identities and ideas within a postcolonial temporality, for example, *Desplazamientos. Aspectos de la Identidad y las Culturas* (1991, Octavio Zaya), *Otro país. Escalas africanas, Islas* (1997, curated by Orlando Britto), *Transatlántico. Diseminación, Cruce y Desterritorialización* (1998, curated by Octavio Zaya) and more recently *Horizontes Insulares* (2010, curated by Orlando Britto and Nilo Palenzuela). Several features characterize this production: a shared concern with mapping the consequences of globalization in local contexts; an incardination of the Canarian artistic production within transnational and intercultural fluxes; an interest in exploring the consequences of cultural miscegenation within the Atlantic space; and, finally, in introducing key names in the debates on postcolonial visual culture to the Iberian horizon<sup>37</sup>.

3-Self-Reflexive Experiences



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5 The practices grouped on this third block are concerned with questioning in a direct way how  
6 curating has been historically used to describe and categorize the Other. Emerging from  
7 different angles and dealing with heterogeneous contexts, they constitute a direct challenge to  
8 the most negative elements of the previous group, and evidence an interest in self-reflexively  
9 addressing the potential, but also the inherent limitations, of challenging the authorial voice  
10 of curatorial practice when representing otherness.  
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18 In the Spanish context, we find several initiatives informed by that intent. In the first  
19 years of the present decade, for example, there were three exhibitions that challenged the way  
20 Latin American art was displayed. *D\_efecto Barroco. Políticas de la imagen hispana* (2010,  
21 MACBA) was a collaboration between Jorge Luis Marzo and Tere Badia. In the same year,  
22 another great revisionary project was presented at the Reina Sofia: *Principio Potosí* was an  
23 exhibition curated by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Max Hinderer, Alice Creischer and Andreas  
24 Siekmann that itinerated between Berlin, Madrid and La Paz (Bolivia). Finally, *La idea de*  
25 *América Latina* was curated in 2012 by Berta Sichel and Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes at the  
26 Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo<sup>38</sup>. The exhibition borrowed Walter Mignolo's book  
27 to remap Latin American art from the point of view of coloniality and recent neocolonial  
28 violences<sup>39</sup>. Those three exhibitions arise from a same realization of the limitations of  
29 regional art shows. Attempting to defy any authorial voice about the other, they refuse the  
30 contention of the problematic aspects of approaching the consequences of colonialism in the  
31 present from a sanitized and isolated time-space. Furthermore, all three projects stress the  
32 importance of outlining hidden continuities between colonial past and neocolonial present,  
33 challenging the idea of a straightforward historic linearity. In *Principio Potosí*, for example,  
34 this is achieved through the juxtaposition of objects from different temporalities and the  
35 diversification of the ways the exhibition can be engaged.  
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The work of the Spanish curator Juan Guardiola has sought to translate this critical approach to the colonality of Spanish curatorial practice in itself through two major exhibitions—*Filipiniana* (2006, Centro Conde Duque, Madrid) and *Colonia Apócrifa* (2014, MUSAC, León)<sup>40</sup>. The first project implied, already from its title, a displacement from representational modes of curating. *Filipiniana* alludes to all the knowledge existing on Philippines, “toda la documentación, tanto autóctona como extranjera, que habla sobre las islas”<sup>41</sup>, making emphasis on how that body of knowledge is produced, and therefore refusing the possibility of sanctioning a specific view on that context. Although being a forgotten presence in the Spanish postcolonial imaginary, the ties connecting Philippines and Spain are present in elements as emblematic as the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid, a central building of the Retiro Park designed in 1887 to contain the botanic brought from Philippines in the occasion of a colonial exhibition, in which *Naturales* were displayed. *Filipiniana* arose in 2006, a year dedicated by the Spanish cultural center Casa Asia to Philippines. The curator attempted to counter that official tone in several ways: by recovering the memory of the 1887 ethnographic exhibition (an entire section is dedicated to the analysis of that process) and by inserting it into a critical narrative. A second point of interest has to do with the exhibition’s chronological range. *Filipiniana* dealt with a multiplicity of topics across a temporal frame of five centuries, including the modernization of the islands, the US influence in the territory, the legacies of Spanish colonialism both in Philippines and in Spain, the emergence of anti-colonial voices or the relevance of current-day cases of corruption. The materials gathered on that purpose include historic documents and photographs, paintings, military objects, contemporary installations and films or site-specific produced artworks. The presence of an array of objects coming from non-artistic museums, a symbolically-charged collection that does not usually merge with contemporary curating and artistic practice, implied a difficult series of cunning negotiations from the side of the curator<sup>42</sup>. A group of Spanish artists were

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3 commissioned to develop a creative stay in the islands and to produce work from their  
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5 experience, attempting to dismantle any idea of exhibiting an “objective” view on Philippine  
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7 reality. Finally, the project was conceived to travel to Manila, where it was displayed in 2007.  
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9 For its part, *Colonial Apócrifa* displayed a vast set of images eloquent on how the Spanish  
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11 colonialist expansion in America, Africa and Asia was visually constructed. Three elements  
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13 are worth outlining concerning the exhibition: the show attempted to counter the idea of  
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15 Spain as a “benevolent” intervenor compared to Britain and France; the displayed objects  
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17 included a similar mix of resources as that of *Filipiniana*; this collection, finally, was  
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19 presented in a non-chronological, Warburgian way, establishing suggestive relations between  
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21 objects not straightforwardly connected<sup>43</sup>.  
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26 Guardiola’s exhibitions are significant because they redeploy the authority of the  
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28 curator, question the selection process, and experiment with the capacity of curating to  
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30 redefining the meaning of existing archives and materials. In Portugal, we also find  
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32 interesting exercises in that sense. Here it is worth mentioning Jurgen Bock’s curatorial  
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34 collaborations with Ângela Ferreira (*Maison Tropicale*, 2007, Instituto das Artes, Lisbon;  
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36 *Hard Rain Show*, 2008, Museu Berardo, Lisbon), Vasco Araújo’s intervention of colonially  
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38 charged buildings and institutions such as the Belem “Tropical” Botanical Garden, Renée  
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40 Green’s exhibitions on Portugal displayed in Lisbon, or *Retornar. Traços de Memória*,  
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42 curated in 2015 by Elsa Peralta. *Retornar* is one of the few exhibitions held in Portugal  
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44 addressing specifically the legacies of Portuguese colonialism in Portugal. As with  
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46 *Filipiniana*, *Retornar* also arises from a commemoration, this time that of the 40<sup>th</sup>  
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48 anniversary of the major transit of *Retornados* population from the African ex-colonies in  
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50 1975. The project comprised several elements: the production of several performances and a  
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52 play on the experience of Portuguese colonizers in Africa, a talk series, the collaboration with  
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54 the Portuguese artists Alfredo Cunha, André Amálio, Bruno Simões Castanheira, Joana  
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Craveiro and Manuel Santos Maia, and an artistic intervention in the Portuguese *Padrão dos Descobrimentos*. This last element was especially significant due to the political charge of the Belem cultural complex, still today a commemorative symbol of Portuguese's imperial projection<sup>44</sup>.

*4-Coloniality beyond Exhibition-Making*

Although it is not the main object of this article, it is worth considering a set of practices that challenged the primacy and the temporality of exhibition-making as main locus of criticism. Around the last years of the 2000s, several artistic networks and long-term initiatives was created, both within and outside the realm of official art institutions. In the Portuguese side, we can outline four main initiatives<sup>45</sup>: the *Próximo Futuro* program, Africa.Cont, ArtAfrica and Buala. Curated by António Pinto Ribeiro, *Próximo Futuro* has been the cornerstone of the Gulbenkian Foundation's cultural programming in the late 2000s. Taking place in two successive editions from 2009 to 2011 and from 2011 to 2014, *Próximo Futuro* addressed issues of multiculturalism, globalization, diasporas and transnationalism, which were already targeted by The State of the World and Distance and Proximity programmes. In this case, a particular focus on the triangular relation between Africa, Latin America (and the Caribbean) and Europe was privileged. The appropriateness of Portugal to center those debates is justified through its insertion into contemporary migratory fluxes<sup>46</sup>; the centrality of Portugal in those fluxes, however, is also questioned. This vision unfolded through art exhibitions, conferences<sup>47</sup>, screenings, performances and seminars. On its part, the Africa.Cont project implied the construction in Lisbon of a contemporary art center focusing on contemporary African art, under the leadership of Fernandes Dias<sup>48</sup>. The planning of that center began in 2007, including the design of a building by David Adjaye, the reurbanization of the zone

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3 between the Rua das Janelas Verdes and the Avenida 24 de Julho, and the constitution of an  
4 art collection; however, the architectural side of the project was abandoned in 2011. The  
5 foundation survived, developing exhibitions and conferences<sup>49</sup>. Both initiatives shared some  
6 characteristics: the magnitude of its aspirations, their intervention in cultural policies (and not  
7 just contemporary art), their engagement with broader geographical areas. Precisely,  
8 comparing Próximo Futuro and Africa.Cont, Maria Restivo argues:  
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18 “Por outro lado, em nenhum dos projetos se encontra uma vontade de reformulação ou de  
19 reescrever a história colonial portuguesa, o que para alguns autores é uma característica  
20 fundamental das correntes pós-coloniais. De facto, ambos os projetos se esquivam às  
21 questões ligadas particularmente ao passado colonial português e mesmo ao tema da  
22 ‘Lusofonia’, um tema recorrente nas ligações Portugal-África. Não há, nestes programas,  
23 uma relação privilegiada com os países lusófonos.”<sup>50</sup>  
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34 It will be this point that ArtAfrica and Buala will try to confront. ArtAfrica is an  
35 online platform founded in 2001 also by Fernandes Dias and supported by the Gulbenkian  
36 Foundation and now based in the Centro de Estudos Comparatistas of Lisbon University. Its  
37 main objective is to map the artistic production of Lusophone African countries, gathering  
38 personal information and visual material of all the artists of the region and critical material on  
39 contemporary African art. Those criteria will lead to a great disparity in terms of quality  
40 among the artists represented. Despite that fact, ArtAfrica developed the first exhaustive  
41 exploration of those contexts, presenting an amount of visual creativity to a great degree  
42 unknown in Portugal.  
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53 Finally, one of the most interesting examples, considering the way it redefines the  
54 centrality of Portugal within the critical debates on Lusophone and “South” spaces, is Buala.  
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3 Launched in 2010 in the São Paulo Biennale by Marta Lança after her cultural work in  
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5 several Portuguese speaking countries, Buala is the first and only existing archive that has  
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7 systematically covered Lusophone contemporary art initiatives dealing with coloniality in the  
8  
9 last decade. It has also provided a forum of discussion among authors from Africa, Europe  
10  
11 and Latin America. It is worth noting that Buala is the only platform in the Portuguese  
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13 context detached from any official dependence. Whereas that situation has threatened in some  
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15 moments the continuity of the initiative, it has allowed Lança a great operational freedom.  
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17 That aperture to multiple voices and registers, along with the horizontality of the contents and  
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19 the free and online availability of all the materials, places Buala at the forefront of the critical  
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21 renegotiations of the Portuguese postcolonial reality.  
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25 In the Spanish side, we can also mention some initiatives working in a similar way.  
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27 *Desacuerdos. Sobre arte, políticas y esfera pública en el estado español* was a collaboration  
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29 initiated in 2004 between Arteleku, UNIA, the Centro José Guerrero of Granada, the Reina  
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31 Sofía Museum and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. Research-driven,  
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33 *Desacuerdos* pursued to decentralize and de-hierarchize the historiographies of artistic  
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35 contemporaneity in the Spanish territory. A series of documents, including a sonic archive  
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37 and eight publications (many of them discussing cultural industries and alternative creative  
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39 practices), derived from the initiative. The *Conceptualismos del Sur* network was created in  
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41 2007, integrating several practitioners and thinkers from Latin America and Spain. Through a  
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43 heterogeneous set of practices, including public interventions, seminars, archival practices,  
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45 publications, tactical media activism or exhibitions such as *Perder la forma humana* (Reina  
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47 Sofía Museum, 2012), the network has produced a sustained corpus of actions directly  
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49 concerned with the task of critically reconceptualizing the histories of artistic practice in  
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51 Latin America and the potential of conceptual strategies emerging from a South viewpoint.  
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Finally, *Península* was created in 2012 as a research platform engaging the legacies of colonialism in the Iberian context.

## Conclusions

This article's main intention was to show how curating emerges as a fertile operational field from where the postcolonial condition of the Iberian territories is redefined. That field has been useful in order to define and reterritorialize ideas of cultural nationalism and regionalism. Being strongly conditioned by the weight of institutionalism and "official" cultural policies, it also encouraged creative and active responses to those. The transitions and dislocations introduced by Iberian curatorial practices can be seen as developing (not without contradictions, as we have seen) a cultural mapping from where the consequences of colonialism in the present emerge both as an object of enquiry and as an unavoidable presence. In that sense, curatorial practices have evolved from displaying a supposedly neutral and objective knowledge of the Other to challenge its own position.

We have seen how many of the discourses emerging in the Iberian curatorial fields are still burdened by a neutralization of the colonial gaze still determining many cultural policies. This is achieved through privileging discursivity over any other cultural dynamic concerning the ex-colonies. Referring to the Portuguese case, Miguel Vale de Almeida mentions the "o acantonamento dos aspectos africanos no campo da cultura expressiva"<sup>51</sup>, something that fully applies to postcolonial artistic and curatorial practices taking place in the Iberian context. Although there are notable exceptions, "postcolonial" curatorial initiatives have created a heap of discourses *about the other*, being the self-reflection on how those discourses are created, whose power they conceal, and what responses they trigger a much less addressed issue. The concatenation between colonialism, decolonization and migration is



still hardly addressed (with the exceptions of some of the practices included in the third and fourth blocks of our categorization), still being predominant “thematic” approaches to “regional” artistic contexts. Moreover, the “otherness” of Iberian societies (the consequences of postcolonialism within the colonizer’s territory, a central concern to understand Portuguese postcolonial condition<sup>52</sup> is frequently detached from regional art exhibitions. In a similar way, when globalization and transnationalism is addressed, that happens through recurring to distant exchanges and processes of mobility, leaving aside the complexity of the migratory fluxes taking place within the Iberian space.

A second major objective of this essay had to do with comparing contexts *a priori* developing unrelated images of their own postcolonial present. An idea of exceptionalism has somehow remained at play when dealing with that present in the case of Portugal. While there are good reasons behind that idea, this article has sought to show how a comparative approach is not just possible but also productive. The idea of Portugal’s “postcolonial exceptionalism” is not the only topic this article intends to distance from. The interpretation of the Portuguese artistic context as a space still bounded by a silence on postcolonial practices and initiatives is just as pervasive. In 1998, the curator Isabel Carlos argued that “Portugal [...] pouco têm reflectido sobre estas questões. [...] Falar de colonização e descolonização em Portugal parece ser, basicamente, pura e simplesmente não falar. Passadas mais de duas décadas após o fim do colonialismo português, pouco, ou muito pouco (ou quase nada) se disse.”<sup>53</sup> In the essay whose quote opened this article, António Fernandes Dias wonders in a similar way whether or not can we talk of a postcolonial interest in the Portuguese curatorial landscape<sup>54</sup>. Finally, Inês Costa Dias argues that the exhibitions dealing with the postcolonial present of Lusophone spaces imply not just a celebratory approach to the concept but “the contraglorification of that discourse”<sup>55</sup>. She contraposes the critical



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3 potential of those kind of practices to the reactionary and refractory attitude of Portuguese  
4 society and its “postcolonial amnesia” towards its imperial past.  
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7 The problem is that an image based on the silence and disinterest of the Portuguese  
8 cultural context towards its postcolonial present does not allow a comparison with any other  
9 model, while at the same time somehow “naturalizes” the relation between Portugal and the  
10 territories formerly colonized by it. Despite those remarkable critical efforts, the logic  
11 continues to be that of display “marginal art” within a Portuguese curatorial landscape to  
12 counter the “indifference of Portuguese society” concerning its postcolonial situation. That  
13 “marginality”, furthermore, remains a symbol of authenticity bounded not without problem to  
14 the artists’ African origin. The problem, again, is that this assumes that art and cultural  
15 institutions exert their power only through discursive means, by showcasing art of a relative  
16 nationality or context, *as if they those strategies were not, or could not be, connivant with*  
17 *multicultural curiosity and the commoditization of the Other.*  
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32 To end this article, allow me to stress some points: 1-The curatorial practices that  
33 emerged out of the context marked by the integration into the EU of the Iberian territories are  
34 comparable. 2-A central point of comparison between them has to do with how they function  
35 as arbiters of the political economy of national and regional identities towards an imperial  
36 past, a globalized present (present also physically in the former metropolitan territories), and  
37 a subaltern and semi-periphereic position concerning Europe but also other *Mainstream*  
38 cultural arenas and curatorial representations. 3-Those three levels are interrelated and  
39 undetachable. 4-That means that curatorial practices dealing with otherness and coloniality  
40 must be understood as operating in the cultural field of this complex sociopolitical  
41 conundrum, and not just as straightforward presentations of the margins and the periphery. 5-  
42 Related to that, their impact cannot be measured as if they were binary oppositions to a  
43 racially and culturally-homogeneous idea of national and regional identity, even when they  
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*do also* operate that function. 6-What has been just outlined does not mean necessarily that because those practices address otherness and globalization are more sensitive to the complex power relations determining the geocultural fields in which Iberian cultural industries operate. 7-Consequently, some of the curatorial examples presented here illustrates the potential of curating in dealing with difference and inequality beyond the “acantonamento” (to bring back Vale de Almeida’s apt term) of exotic otherness into the field of discursiveness.

## Appendix 1: Curatorial Practices and Coloniality in the Iberian Context, ca. 1990-2017.

	Portugal	Spain
1991		- <i>La Escuela del Sur. Joaquín Torres García y su legado</i> (Reina Sofía Museum, from now on MNCARS)
1992		- <i>Plus Ultra</i> (Seville International Exhibition.) - <i>Tierra de nadie</i> (Granada)
1993	- <i>Cinco olhares</i> (CIDAC) - <i>Alvim</i> (Fundação Callouste Gulbenkian (from now on FCG))	
1994	- <i>Escultura angolana: Memorial de cultura</i> (Museu Nacional de Etnologia) - <i>Além da Taprobana. A figura humana nas artes plásticas dos países de língua portuguesa</i> (Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, from now on SNBA)	- <i>Cocido y crudo</i> (MNCARS)
1995	- <i>São Tomé Biennale</i> - <i>Encontros africanos</i> (Culturgest)	- <i>Otro país. Escalas africanas</i> (Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, from now on CAAM)
1996	- <i>Don't Mess with Mister in Between. Fifteen Artists from South Africa</i> - <i>sincretismo</i> (CAAM)	- <i>Cuba siglo XX: Modernidad y</i>

	(Culturgest)	
	-Mulheres do sul (CIDAC)	
	-Les Fous d'Abidjan (Oikos)	
	-Artistas de Nairobi (Oikos)	
	-Tchalé Figueira (Galeria Novo Século)	
1997		-Islas (CAAM)
1998	-Trading Images (Instituto de arte contemporânea)	-Caribe Insular: Exclusión, Fragmentación y Paraíso (Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, from now on MEIAC)
		-Proyecto Almadraba (Tanger-Gibraltar-Algeciras)
		-Trasatlántico. Diseminación, cruce y desterritorialización (CAAM)
1999	-Arte moçambicana (SNBA)	
	-De Matatana a Matatana (Camões Institute)	
2000	-Século XX. Arte do Brasil	-El tiempo de África (CAAM)
	-Um oceano inteiro para nadar (Culturgest)	-Versiones del Sur: Cinco propuestas en torno al arte en América
	-Brasil (Museu do Chiado)	(MNCARS): Cycle composed by the exhibitions
		F(r)icciones, Heterotopías: medio siglo sin lugar,

		<i>1918-1968, No es sólo lo que ves.</i>
		<i>Pervirtiendo el Minimalismo, Más allá</i>
		<i>del documento and Eztétyka del sueño</i>
<b>2001</b>	<i>-Mediterráneo. Um novo muro?</i> (Culturgest) <i>-Mistura+Confronto</i> (Central Elétrica do Freixo)	<i>-El indigenismo en diálogo</i> (CAAM)
<b>2002</b>		<i>-Comer o no comer</i> (Centro de Arte Salamanca)
<b>2003</b>		
<b>2004</b>	<i>-Mais à sul. África na coleção CGD.</i> <i>-Arte Lisboa: Contemporary Art Fair</i>	<i>-El corazón de las tinieblas</i> (Palau de la Virreina)
<b>2005</b>	<i>-Looking both Ways</i> (Itinerant) <i>-Travel</i> (Lisbon)	
<b>2006</b>	<i>-Réplica e rebeldia</i> (Itinerant)	<i>-Filipiniana</i> (Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid)
<b>2007</b>	<i>-Ida e volta. Ficção e realidade</i> <i>-Lisboa-Luanda-Maputo</i> (Cordoaria Nacional) <i>-Artistas de Moçambique. Percursos</i> <i>recentes</i> (CGD) <i>-Troca de olhares</i> (Instituto Camões, Praia, Cabo Verde) <i>-State of the World</i> (FCG)	<i>-Historia de un viaje</i> (Valencia)
<b>2008</b>	<i>-De Malangatana a Cabrita Reis</i>	<i>-30th Pontevedra Biennale</i>

	(Culturgest)	
2009	-Entre partidas e chegadas (Itinerant) -Próximo Futuro Program (FCG)	-Modernologías (Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, from now on MACBA) -Globalizados (MUSAC, León)
2010	-Quando os convidados se tornam anfitriões (Culturgest, Porto) -Creation of Buala	-Principio Potosí (Itinerant) -El D_efecto Barroco. Políticas de la imagen hispana (Centro de Cultura Contemporánea de Barcelona, from now on CCCB) -Horizontes Insulares (Itinerant) -CGEM. Apuntes sobre la emancipación (MUSAC) -Manifesta 8 (Murcia)
2011		-PIGS (Artium, Vitoria)
2012	-Para além da história (Centro de Arte José de Guimarães, from now on CAJG)	-La idea de América Latina (Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo)
2013	-Licções de escuridão (CAJG)	
2014		-Colonia apócrifa (MUSAC)
2015	-Retornar (EGEAC, Lisbon) -São Paulo Biennale (Serralves Foundation, Porto) -Ilha de São Jorge (Itinerant, displayed in Hangar, Lisbon)	

2016 -*Kin* (Hangar, Lisbon)

-*Ghost* (Itinerant, displayed in  
Hangar, Lisbon)

2017

-*El borde de una herida. Migración,  
exilio y colonialidad en el Estrecho*  
(CentroCentro, Madrid)  
-*Provincia 53. Arte y descolonización  
en el Sáhara Occidental* (MUSAC and  
CDAN, Huesca)

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> António Fernandes Dias, “Pós-colonialismo nas artes visuais, ou talvez não” in *Portugal não é um país pequeno*, ed. M. Ribeiro Sanches (Lisbon: Cotovia, 2006): 329-330.

<sup>2</sup> Juan Vicente Aliaga, El fondo de la cuestión. Sobre las características del comisariado en el Estado español en las décadas de los 80 y los 90” *Impasse 5. La década equivocada: el trasfondo del arte contemporáneo español en los 90* (Lleida: Ajuntament de Lleida i Centre d’art la Panera, 2005): 240.

<sup>3</sup> I use here coloniality following Aníbal Quijano’s insights on the matter. To put it simply, for Quijano coloniality refers to the most durable and deep consequences of colonialism embedded in the articulation of capitalism, modernity and power. The conceptualization of coloniality as an epistemological viewpoint is eloquent about the existence of hidden processes of forgetting and active remembering that are very much at play in the curatorial practices discussed here. The term also challenges the image of a stable and neutral postcolonial Portugal and Spain, highlighting the contradictions present in the making of that image. Finally, it points at the continuity of colonial imaginaries in the ways Iberian’s colonial past is curatorially reenacted and updated. See Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina” in *La colonialidad del*

*saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales. Perspectivas latinoamericanas*, ed. E. Lander, 342-386 (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2000.)

<sup>4</sup> Portuguese postcolonial studies have reflected extensively on the continuities and persistence of a rhetoric of imperial *grandeur* in democratic, postcolonial times through a Lusotropical imaginary. The role of curating and contemporary art's institutional politics in the maintenance and challenge of that imaginary is still to be determined. See Miguel Vale de Almeida, *Um mar da cor da terra: raça, cultura e política de identidade* (Oeiras: Celta, 2000); Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and Ana Paula Ferreira, *Fantasma e fantasias imperiais no imaginário português contemporâneo* (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2003); António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro (orgs.), *Geometrias da memória: configurações pós-coloniais*. (Porto: Afrontamento, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> See Selma Reuben Holo, *Beyond the Prado. Museums and Identity in Democratic Spain* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Miguel Vale de Almeida detected this as early as in 2002. In that sense, he argues that “Hoje o tropo culturalista da língua e a vaga noção de um passado comum parecem infiltrar-se como tentativas de reconstruir uma entidade pós-colonial capaz de contrabalançar o efeito da erosão da globalização e a marginalidade portuguesa no seio da UE.” Miguel Vale de Almeida, “O Atlântico Pardo: antropologia, pós-colonialismo e o caso “lusófono””, ed. C. Castelo, M. Vale de Almeida and B. Feldman-Bianco, 33 (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Fernando Arenas, “Migrations and the Rise of African Lisbon: Time-Space of Portuguese (Post)coloniality” *Postcolonial Studies* 18 (4) (2015): 354.

<sup>8</sup> See Holo, *Beyond the Prado*; Jesús Carrillo, “La institución y la institucionalización de la crítica en España ca. 1985-1995” *Desacuerdos* 8 (2014): 250-289.

<sup>9</sup> See Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>10</sup> To mention just a few cases, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía was created in 1992, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, in 1995, the Bilbao Guggenheim, in 1997. The creation of contemporary art centers and museums played the double role of acting as cornerstone of cultural modernity, and establishing differentiating elements among the Spanish *Comunidades Autónomas*. In the Portuguese case, the Serralves Foundation was created in 1989; Culturgest arose in 1993, and the same year the Belem Cultural Center started functioning. I have dealt with this process in REF1, REF2.



<sup>11</sup> It is crucial not to reduce the debates on identity, cultural policies and modernization to the binary Spain-Portugal. On the contrary, the Iberian curatorial landscape will function as a more complex terrain, in which each region and institution will borrow form heterogeneous referents (the impact of Portuguese art in Spain is, for instance, indissolubly linked to that multifaceted, relational reality.)

<sup>12</sup> See Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Inter-Identity" *Luso-Brazilian Review* 39(2) (2002): 9-43.

<sup>14</sup> As a matter of fact, some of the most discussed and successful exhibitions in terms of audience were directly brought to Portuguese and Spanish art centers, constituting cornerstones of both countries' politics of display. In that sense, we can mention exhibitions such as *Looking both Ways. Contemporary Artists from Africa* (curated by Laurie Ann Farrell in 2004) or *Afro Modern: Journeys through the Black Atlantic* (curated by Tanya Barson in 2010).

<sup>15</sup> The Casa de la Contratación de Indias, located in Seville, had the monopoly of all the commerce incoming from the Americas.

<sup>16</sup> Among those we can mention the San Luis Church in Seville, the Market of Úbeda (Jaén) or the Torreón de Santa Cruz in Cádiz. To this we have to add the organization of several events directed to a non-specialist audience. See Montse Romani, "Nuevos modelos de 'exposición' en los años 90". Available at: [http://marceloexposito.net/pdf/1969\\_marzodocumento09.pdf](http://marceloexposito.net/pdf/1969_marzodocumento09.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> As Villaespesa points out: "realizamos [*Plus Ultra*] para el Pabellón de Andalucía de la Expo92 bajo dos condiciones: que las exposiciones e intervenciones que produjéramos se abordaran desde una perspectiva que apuntara más a la reflexión que a la celebración y que se desarrollara fuera de la Isla de la Cartuja, espacio emblemático dedicado precisamente a celebrar el Descubrimiento." Available at: <http://fxysudoble.com/es/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/El-productor-como-productor1.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Romani, "Nuevos modelos..."

<sup>19</sup> Mar Villaespesa, "Além da água. Un proyecto transfronterizo Alentejo-Extremadura" *Atlántica* 20 (1998): 122-27.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Rogelio López Cuenca's *El paraíso es de los extraños* (2002), the *Transacciones/Fadaiat* Project (2003-2004), *Suturas y fragmentos* (2004-2006), *Umbrales* (2009), *Sobre fronteras y cuerpos desplazados* (2014) or *Atravesando fronteras: realidad y representación en el Mediterráneo* (2015).

<sup>21</sup> Vale de Almeida, *Um mar...*16.

<sup>22</sup> João Carlos Almeida, "Memória e Identidade Nacional. As Comemorações Públicas, As Grandes Exposições e o Processo de (re)construção da Nação." Conference paper (2004), 3.

<sup>23</sup> See Renata Ribeiro dos Santos, "Um oceano inteiro para nadar. A (des)presença da arte do Brasil (século xx) em Portugal, 1980-2000" *Pós: Belo Horizonte* 4 (7) (2014): 184-198.

<sup>24</sup> The project took the name of *Memória Intimas Marcas*, and implied long-term research in the Cuito Cuanavale area.

<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.publico.pt/noticias/jornal/confronto-sem-mistura-162970>

<sup>26</sup> Renata Ribeiro dos Santos, "Um oceano...", 193.

<sup>27</sup> Inês Costa Dias, "Curating Contemporary Art and the Critique to Lusophonie" *Arquivos da memória* 5-6 (2009): 6-46.

<sup>28</sup> Ruth Rosengarten and Paulo Reis, *Um oceano inteiro para nadar*. (Lisbon: Culturgest, 2000), 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ruth Rosengarten and Paulo Reis, *Um oceano...*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> In 1995, the São Tomé Biennale was created. In 2007 was celebrated the first edition of the Luanda Triennale, one year after the foundation of the Sindika Dokolo Foundation; also in 2007, that institution developed the first African pavilion at the Venice Biennale, *Check List-Luanda Pop*. On those events, see Christabelle Peters, "The Cultural Politics of Luso-African Identity: A Look at the 7th São Tomé Biennial" *Critical Interventions* 10 (3) (2016): 261-275, Ana Balona de Oliveira, "Descolonização em, de e através das imagens de arquivo 'em movimento' da prática artística" *Comunicação e Sociedade* 29 (2016): 107-131.

<sup>31</sup> For instance, *Arte Africana em Portugal* (1985), *Cinco Olhares* (1993), *Fernando Alvim* (1993), *Escultura Angolana: Memorial de Cultura* (1994), *Don't Mess with Mister in Between* (1996), *Mulheres do Sul* (1996), *Dorris Haron Kasco*, *Les Fous D'Abidjan* (1996), *Bouna Medoune Seye*, *Les Trottoirs de Dakar* (1996), *Artistas de Nairobi* (1996) and *Tchalé Figueira* (1996).

<sup>32</sup> This is evident, for example, in Lisboa-Luanda-Maputo, whose curatorial statement is divided into three parts, being the one dealing with Lisbon dedicated to commemorate the Discovery Era and the role of the Portuguese nation in “initiating planetary culture [Sic!].” V. Pinto da Fonseca and L. Alegre (eds.) *Lisboa-Luanda-Maputo* (Lisbon: Cordoaria Nacional, 2007), 9.

<sup>33</sup> Spain became the first country in hosting two editions of the itinerant European biennale, being the fifth edition of the event held in Donostia in 2004. The “Basque *Manifesta*”, with multiple (decontextualized) references to violence and terrorism, was also not exempt of polemic.

<sup>34</sup> Besides introducing a thematic focus, *Manifesta 8* also was the first edition organized by curatorial teams instead of individual curators.

<sup>35</sup> <http://manifesta.org/manifesta-8/>

<sup>36</sup> There has been a particular interest, manifest in several exhibitions and art residencies, in connecting the Canarian territories with Lusophone insular spaces such as Cape Vert, São Tomé, Madeira or Açores.

<sup>37</sup> The Canary Islands, through a campaign of sustained support of this “pluricontinental” cultural policy, will be the entrance door of many African and Latin American artists to the European art scene. This will hold true even after the economic crisis, when other Spanish institutions will significantly cut their budgets for “peripheral art”.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed discussion of these projects and other similar initiatives arising around 2010, see María Íñigo Clavo, “Exhausted 2010: Networking Latin America (Art) History.” Unpublished paper ceded by the author.

<sup>39</sup> The artists selected included Alfredo Jaar, Federico Guzmán, Marta Minujín, Chema Cobo, Joaquín Torres García or Adriana Bustos. See <http://www.caac.es/programa/idea12/frame.htm#inf>

<sup>40</sup> Recently, Guardiola has pursued this lane of enquiry with *Al borde de una herida* (2017, CentroCentro, Madrid) and *Provincia53. Arte y descolonización en el Sahara Occidental* (MUSAC, CDAN), two exhibitions that explore the consequences of migratory fluxes in the Strait of Gibraltar and the Sahara struggle for independence through the lens of the concept of internal colonialism.

<sup>41</sup> Press dossier, available at: [http://www.xavierribas.com/Contents/Exhibitions/Filipiniana\\_press.pdf](http://www.xavierribas.com/Contents/Exhibitions/Filipiniana_press.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> Personal conversation with Juan Guardiola, Lisbon, 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Dolores Alcaide Ramírez, “Colonia apócrifa. Una exhibición que cuestiona el colonialismo español” *Arte y políticas de identidad* 13 (2015): 341-346.

<sup>44</sup> Elsa Peralta 2013. “A composição de um complexo de memória: O caso de Belém, Lisboa” in *Cidade e império. Dinâmicas coloniais e reconfigurações pós-coloniais*, ed. Nuno Domingos and Elsa Peralta (Lisbon: Edições 70, 2013): 361-415.

<sup>45</sup> The Allgarve Program, created in 2007 by the Serralves Foundation, has also develop some thought on mobility, displacement and the touristic condition of the Southern region of Portugal, including exhibitions, but also talks, video screenings, can also be mentioned here.

<sup>46</sup> “A sociedade portuguesa tem, pela sua história e pela experiência recente de acolher migrantes de múltiplas origens étnicas e culturais, uma especial oportunidade de desenvolver massa crítica que favoreça a compreensão dos novos fenómenos, contribua para o entendimento mútuo e beneficie das novas dimensões da interculturalidade.” António Pinto Ribeiro, “Programa Gulbenkian Próximo Futuro” *Próximo Futuro* 1 (2009): 2.

<sup>47</sup> Among the speakers we find names such as those of Walter Mignolo, Adonis, Ticio Escobar or Achille Mbembe.

<sup>48</sup> In the following interview, Fernandes Dias develops the project’s main ideas: <http://www.artecapital.net/entrevista-64-jose-antonio-fernandes-dias>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.africacont.org/exposicoes.html>

<sup>50</sup> Maria Restivo. 2016. “O pós-colonialismo e as instituições culturais portuguesas: o caso do programa Gulbenkian Próximo Futuro e do projeto Africa.Cont” *E-Revista de Estudos Interculturais do CEI-ISCAP* 4 (2016):16.

<sup>51</sup> Miguel Vale de Almeida, “O Atlântico Pardo...”, 31. See also “Portugal’s Colonial Complex: From Colonial Lusotropicalism to Postcolonial Lusophony”. Available at: <http://miguelvaledalmeida.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/portugals-colonial-complex.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> See Inocência Mata, “Estranhos em permanência: a negociação da identidade portuguesa na pós-colonialidade” in *Portugal não é um país pequeno*, ed. M. Ribeiro Sanches (Lisbon: Cotovia, 2006): 285-317.

<sup>53</sup> Isabel Carlos, *Imagens de troca* (Lisbon: Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, 1998), 15.

<sup>54</sup> António Fernandes Dias, “Pós-colonialismo...”, 323.

<sup>55</sup> Inês Costa Dias, “Curating Contemporary...”, 7. She focuses particularly on three projects: *Trading Images*, *Um Oceano Inteiro para Nadar* and *Réplica and Rebeldia*.

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